

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): Side-~~A side~~ wall (1) of a plant for the continuous casting of metal strip (5) ~~between two counter rotating rolls (2, 2') having horizontal axes and being internally cooled, the surfaces of which define a casting space confined laterally by two side walls (1) made of refractory~~ ~~of the type comprising:~~

- a support plate (6) on the front face of which a recess (7) is made;
- an insert (9) made of hard material placed around the periphery of the recess

(7);

- a lining (11) that fills the remainder of the recess (7);

~~characterized in that~~wherein the front face (12), turned towards the casting space, of the said lining (11) is set back by a maximum distance (d) from the front face (13) of the insert (9) over at least part of its length.

2. (currently amended): Side-~~The side~~ wall (1) according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the front face (12), turned towards the casting space, of the said lining (11) is set back from the front face of the insert (9) over its entire length.

3. (currently amended): Side-~~The side~~ wall (1) according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein over a length (h_1), starting from an upper edge of the recess (7), the lining (11)

has a constant thickness (e) and ~~in that~~ over a length (h_2), the lining (11) has a thickness that increases up to a level where the said thickness is equal to that of the insert (9).

4. (currently amended): ~~Side~~The side wall (1) according to Claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the said level where the said thickness is equal to that of the insert (9) is a lower edge (14) of the recess (7).

5. (currently amended): ~~Side~~The side wall (1) according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the lining (11) has a thickness that increases from an upper edge of the recess (7) down to a lower edge (14) of the recess (7).

6. (currently amended): ~~Side~~The side wall (1) according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the distance (d) is equal to 10 mm or more.

7. (currently amended): ~~Side~~The side wall (1) according to Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the distance (d) is between 80 and 150 mm.

8. (currently amended): ~~Side~~The side wall (1) according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~further comprising ~~it includes an~~ appendage (15) over the width of the front face (12) of the lining (11), the said-appendage (15) being designed to overhang the surface of the liquid metal present in the casting space.

9. (new): An apparatus for the continuous casting of metal strip (5) comprising:
two counter-rotating rolls (2, 2') having horizontal axes; and
a casting space, wherein the surfaces which define the casting space confined laterally
are two side walls (1) made of refractory comprising:

- a support plate (6) on the front face of which a recess (7) is made;
- an insert (9) made of hard material placed around the periphery of the recess

(7);

- a lining (11) that fills the remainder of the recess (7);

wherein the front face (12), turned towards the casting space, of the lining (11) is set
back by a maximum distance (d) from the front face (13) of the insert (9) over at least part of
its length.

10. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the front face (12), turned
towards the casting space, of the lining (11) is set back from the front face of the insert (9)
over its entire length.

11. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein over a length (h_1), starting
from an upper edge of the recess (7), the lining (11) has a constant thickness (e) and over a
length (h_2), the lining (11) has a thickness that increases up to a level where the said thickness
is equal to that of the insert (9).

12. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the said level where the said thickness is equal to that of the insert (9) is a lower edge (14) of the recess (7).

13. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the lining (11) has a thickness that increases from an upper edge of the recess (7) down to a lower edge (14) of the recess (7).

14. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the distance (d) is equal to 10 mm or more.

15. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein the distance (d) is between 80 and 150 mm.

16. (new): The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the side wall further comprising an appendage (15) over the width of the front face (12) of the lining (11), the appendage (15) being designed to overhang the surface of the liquid metal present in the casting space.